

B A L L A N T Y N

F O R

Merchants and Mariners.

Containing an undoubted Account

O F T H E

Principal Causes

Of the great

Decay of Trade;

With proper DIRECTIONS to set our
T R A D E again on a right FOOT.

By a sincere Well-wisher to the TRADE and
PROSPERITY of the NATION.

EXOD. XX. 7, 15.

*Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain;
for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his Name
in vain.*

Thou shalt not Steal.

Matth. xxiii. 21. *Render therefore unto Caesar, the Things
which are Caesar's; and unto God the Things that are God's.*

E D I N B U R G H,

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A Ballance for Merchants and Mariners, &c.

TH E R E is scarce any Thing this Day, in which all People of different Principles and Interests among us will more harmoniously agree, than in the mournful Complaint that this poor Land is sinking with Poverty. This is the general Outcry and Moan in every Corner of the Land ; scarce two or three meet together on any Occasion, but they'll drop passionate Lamentations and their Fears of the utter Desolation of the Land on this Account. This is what all see the dreadful Marks of, Rich and Poor too sensibly feel ; City and Country are in Perplexity about it : And, as we are stated at present, there is little appearance of any suitable Relief against it.

Since it cannot be denied that the Prosperity of the Nation depends much on the flourishing of our Trade, and that there is a visible and very great Decay of some Branches thereof ; it deeply concerns all Traders, especially to understand the true and genuine Causes thereof, and to trace this Misery to its natural Springs and Source ; and above all, to search out the procuring Cause of the Lord's just Indignation against us in this heavy Judgment under which the Land fainteth. 'Tis to this last I design to confine my self in these Sheets.

I am very much afraid there will not be so great Unanimity in this Point, as were to be wisht ; every Party will suggest what best suits their own Schemes, Interests and Designs : But I fear few will see and own these Sins for which the Anger of God is flaming against us this Day.

'Tis beyond all Controversy that we are in a great Trespas this Day ; the accursed Thing is among us, and no wonder we do not prosper. Besides all the other crying and crimson Sins, the notorious and Heaven-daring Abominations our Land is defiled with, the Detail of which I design

sign not to enter on here ; *hainous* and *atrocious* Crimes in the Matter of Trade, are grown up unto the Heavens, and cry loudly in the Ears of the Lord of *Sabaoth*. Is there not then absolute need of searching out and discovering our Iniquity in this, that the Lord's Anger may be turned away from us !

To find out these Sins will not be so difficult ; but to reclaim from them will be found a harder Task than some may imagine. Reformation of these Sins in Trade is more to be wisht than expected. 'Tis very rare to see a People give up with Sins by which they reap much worldly Gain, when they are very common, and they have been long accustomed to commit them ; Sins that they pretend they are forc'd to, and without which they and their Families cannot subsist ; yea, which they account excuseable *Peccadillos*, especially if they think (all things considered which they have in view) that they are no Sins at all, but lawful and expedient : I say, Sinners will not tamely part with such Sins, 'tis not easy to bring them to pluck out such right Eyes and cut off such right Hands and cast them from them. Now,
are

are not the Sins in the business of Trade of this dangerous and ensnaring Nature? To reprove them sharply, or cuttingly, as that Word *Tit. i. 13.* rendered *Sharply* signifies is then certainly necessary. Dangerous Imposthumes, old festering Sores require deep Incisions and Lancing; this is what, I fear, the Patients will scarce endure: But whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, I resolve to exoner my Conscience, and Witness against their Sin.

I am not to discourse so much of all Sins People are guilty of in trading, as of *running* or *embazeling* Goods to save the Duties imposed by the Government, and the down-right plain *Perjuries* many are commonly guilty of at the Custom-House about them. All that live near Coast-side Towns, know Mariners and Merchants that drive a foreign Trade, practise the first very ordinarily, without any Scruple, to the great Damage of the publick Revenue, which no Man can justify. The other also, *viz.* The swearing falsely on this and other Accounts, which is by far the greater Sin, as you shall hear, abounds

so prodigiously, that some base People may be said to drive a Trade of Perjury.

As to the first, 'Tis too flagrant to be denied, that many are scandalously guilty of runing Goods; and 'tis such a Work of Darknes, so great a Mystery of Iniquity it can't be expected that I shall be able to discover all the *Chicans* and *Tricks* of those People, but what I have observ'd, I shall narrate, and baffle their childish Pretences, set the Wickedness that's in't in a right Light, and afterwards expose the horrid Perjuries so often perpetrated by them.

Sometimes when Merchants in foreign Parts design to ship Goods aboard of a Vessel coming home (which either cannot be enter'd, or they design not to Enter, because the Duties are great) the Master gives no Bills of Loading; and some will not speak particularly with the Masters about the Goods, when they have smelt the Matter, but commits it to the Mate, and he is to look to the Runing of them, for all which he has the Master's Allowance; and either the Master or he will detain so many of the Goods as will pay the Freight of them, least there be a Plea, and he knows he dare not pursue. And yet tho'

tho' here the Man knows enough of the Goods to make him guilty both of the running and false swearing at the Custom-House, he hugs himself in the fond Fancy of his Innocency as to both. But now a-days, Men often go more briskly to Work, and scruple not to Witness more of it.

'Tis now very ordinary, that the Master will give Directions to his own Ship's Crew about the running the Goods, and to the Boatmen or Fishers also that come to carry them off, where to lodge them; and then the Master either goes a shoar or to his Bed; and on this he thinks he may swear the Custom-House Oath at the Entry of the Ship. Now, what a weak and witless Shift this is to escape Perjury, you will see by the Oath after inserted.

If Waiters attempt to go aboard the Ship, sometimes when they have many prohibite Goods to run, they will Deforce them, as severals have done, then run their Goods, go abroad to foreign Parts, change their Master, and sometimes the Crew, at least some of them, and come home with their Goods, and so deny all was done, or that they or the Ship was on the Coast.

Some-

Sometimes when the Custom-House Boats meet them, and put any Waiters aboard e're they can run any Goods, they try first to Bribe them, and they find no great Difficulty in it, except where the Waiters prove Honest, or become Jealous of one another; if they yield, the Crew goes to Work and runs the Goods: But if the Waiters will not take a Bribe contrary to their Oath *de fidei*, then they will violent them with the help of others that often come masked to assist them either at Sea, or in a Harbour, and carry off the Goods by Force, and afterwards sail the Ship to a Port belonging to another Custom-House, and there Enter the remaining Goods that were not run, and set one to Enter the Ship and swear the Oath that was not Master; yea perhaps that was not so much as one of the Crew, and so Trick the Custom-House, and involve themselves in a manifold Perjury for a very small Profit. And to this the Master, and often the Merchants also, but especially the Master have Accession. I knew one who of late confessed he was guilty of this, and promised he should never do the like again.

In

In time of War, when a Ship was seen lying off to play their Cards, then they contrived and spread a lying Story, that it was a *Privateer*; especially a famous *Smugler* used this Stratagem. And therefore, when Ships were seen that People suspected to be at such Work, they would have said, *There is one of such a Man's Privateers*. Never did any so trick and insult a Government with Runing, Embazeling, &c. as this Man for many Years has done. He has Skippers, Boatmen, Fishers, and others so clever and through paced at Runing, and if need be, also at Swearing, that there's no reaching him except he be taken in the Fang; and 'tis pretty dangerous even then to attack him, since he has so many sturdy desperate Fellows at Work.

I have known some Masters that have bought and shipt the Goods, run them, sold and deliver'd them before they went to the Custom-House, and yet never bogged at the Custom-House Oath.

A Master once told me, he had Goods aboard he would not enter, and when I minded him of the Oath, &c. he said he would first enter the Ship, and afterwards
run

run the Goods. I knew not the Oath then, but thought there had been no more in it, but to swear that to his Knowledge, Bulk was not broken; but when I understood the rest of the Oath, I was astonish'd how he could satisfy his Conscience about it. The Man was knowing and very blameless otherwise; but I am sure if he was a good Man, his Wisdom and Goodness both were in a Fever: Had he committed Adultery, it could not been more choaking to the Fear of God.

- Some Masters I could name, who are of the best Repute in the Place where they live, that have assisted at runing of the Goods; and when the Merchants that employed them to buy them, and to witness the runing of them, have insulted them, and asked them, how they would swear the Custom-House Oath after all was done; and when this Perjury that followed came to be discovered to some Ministers, they were much damped. But it was never heard, that they were so at any Time, when the stealing of the Goods was kept secret, nor did they stand at the Oath for all that. Some Ship-Masters pretend to give over going to Sea any more merely

ly for the Oaths that must be sworn, who were great embezlers; but observe, they never did this, till they became rich, by Stealing and Swearing. And tho' they stay at Home, yet they have commonly every Voyage their Share of Goods that are run, by which the Skipper is involved in a Perjury, to which they have Accession; and tho' they had no Goods, yet if the Secret be committed to them by the Freighters, Are they not Partakers of their Sin? What abominable Hypocrisy is this?

There are some new Traders who outdo all the Smuglers, that ever went before them, by runing of vast Quantities of Goods, and have taken a new and surprising Method, to tempt the King's Servants concerned in the Customs, to connive at it. They cause some of their Trustees search out, if they be owing any Debts, and procure Assignations to them, and take them with Captions; while in the Discharge of their Office, they are serving the King, &c. This is a pretty Invention, and worthy of the Authors, tho' I do not think it a very wise Politick; for this will not hinder them to do their Duty, when they are out of the Net, and I hear some have

have found it to their Cost; yea, I fear sometimes this may even tempt Nature to rebell against Principle.

Now, there is no Sin that Sinners will want a Pretence for, and when there is a violent Inclination to a Sin, a very weak and trifling one will serve. All that ever I could hear adduced by any, for this disloyal cheating the Government of the Customs imposed on Goods, are so frivolous and ridiculous, that 'tis to me a Wonder, how a reasonable Creature, a Man in his Wits, can please himself, and cheat his Conscience with them. Such as they are, I shall mention them, and give my Thoughts of them very briefly.

1. Some do alledge, *That great Men in publick Trust often cheat the Government in more than they do, and since it goes that Way, why may not they take a Share?*

Ans. No doubt the Government has too often suffered that Way, tho' I hope the present Ministry will not follow the Example; and tho' they really did so, trading People have the less Need to do it; otherwise, if People will generally think this Example to be a sufficient Warrant, the Government would soon be impoverish,

right, and turn Bankrupt: Beside, this can never justify their Theft; for will one Thiefs Stealing, excuse another's doing so in other Things? No sure, far less then can it do so in the Case in Hand. *Two Blacks can never make a White.*

2. Some plead, *The Goods are their own, and what Fault can there be in runing them?*

Answ. I own it's but the more stupid and dull Sort of Men, that will chate at this Rate, for the Custom laid on Goods, is none of their Property, but belongs to King and Government. 'Tis no more theirs than the Crown which he wears. Moreover, if this Plea be good, it must also warrant denying all, even the least Tribute to the Magistrate, that's impos'd on any of their Goods; and I believe there is no pilfering Smugler, whatever he would be at, will dare to avow this, which is inconsistent with the standing of any Government.

3. Others say, *That Trade is so low, they can get no Freights from Merchants, except they'll run Goods for them, and often their Owners are their Freighters, are content to hazard the Ship, and press the runing Goods.*

Answ.

Answ. I doubt not that Merchants often drive Mariners on it, and are as guilty of their Sin, in embezleing and swearing falsely, as one Man can be of another's. They'll hiss at them and run them down as *Fools* and *Dunces* that decline such impious Tricks; and when others at their Direction have perjur'd themselves to save a little Money to them; they'll jest and tell the guilty, they are worthy to be Masters, for they encourage Trade. At the Hands of such Merchants, God will require it. But be it so, that Merchants thus tempt to it, what Ignorance do they bewray, that think this will excuse so great a Sin? If a Temptation from the Devil or his Tools could justify Sin, then all Sin were excusable. Moreover, 'tis abominably false, to say no Freight can be got otherwise; for do they not sometimes get Voyages in which they can get no Goods at all to run? Yea, sometimes they run none for the Freighters, but only what belongs to the Master and the Crew. I have known some, tho' but very few, that will not run Goods for their nearest Relations, no not for themselves, and yet they use to get Voyages, as ready as others.

4. Some think, *Why may they not do it, since it's so common? Every Body does it, we are not singular, we are but like Neighbour and other.*

Answ. I am very sorry, that it is so common; for that Skipper that's innocent, is a *speckled Bird* indeed, and very few Merchants that drive a foreign Trade, can throw a Stone at them. The contagious Plague has almost infected all, tho' as is above said, it is not universal. But remember, † *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil.* 'Tis the worse that the Sin is so epidemick; this hainously accents it, since it is a Conspiracy against the Lord: And further, if this be a good Defence, it will justify the worst of Immoralities, when common.

5. Many, I know, are fond of this Defence, *The King and Government can spare it well enough, and therefore 'tis no Fault to run their own Goods, say they.*

Answ. I am sure, never could they spare it worse these hundred Years past, than now, when the publick Debts are become so great and extraordinary they can't but need it very much. We may easily see the publick

† Exod. xxiii. 2.

publick Debts are great, since often in Parliaments we hear of more granted to make up the Deficiency of former Funds. But tho' the Government could spare something of it, they can't be competent Judges of that, farless ought they at their own Hand rob them. Such a Pretence would open a Door for every Body to with-hold Tribute and Customs. Beside, this will serve better to justify stealing from every Person that is rich, since they can better spare it than the King and Government; for Riches consist not simply in having great Treasures of Gold, Silver, &c. but in having much more of these than a Person has Occasion and Use for, beyond what their Station, Character and Business obliges them to spend. Yet none of these Traders will avow it lawful to steal from Fellow-Subjects, tho' this Argument serves that Purpose better.

6. Some stand not to plead an absolute Necessity for runing several Sorts of Goods; for, say they, *We cannot otherwise make any Profit, nor provide for ourselves and Families, since the Duties on most Goods are so Heavy, and those that pay small Duties often sell not well.*

B

Answ.

Answ. Is not a moderate Gain with a good Conscience far better than great Riches without it? But * *some will be rich, and no wonder they fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition; for the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil.* I fear, 'tis not to make an honest Provision for themselves and their Families, but rather to make Provision for their Lusts that some do so. The Luxury and Prodigality of some Skippers and Merchants is intolerable; when abroad, some Sparks will spend as if they were Captains of First-Rates, and at home they live so high in Feasting, sumptuous Cloaths and Household-furniture, that they not only Rival with, but often exceed some of the best Barons of the Land: And some dainty delicate Dames are woful Snares to their Husbands this Way. These Lusts must have Fewel, and so to support their Pride and Luxury, they must steal and swear like *Knights of the Post* at all Ports; whereas would such profuse Persons live soberly they would be under small Temptations to these Sins. I own, there are some Goods a
very

very great Duty, as 'tis call'd, is impos'd on, to hinder the Importation of them, such as Brandy, Soap, and the like. There is no Brandy, Soap, &c. brought home to be enter'd, and yet as much Brandy imported as ever, as appears by the Cheapness of it, and none of this they Enter. Has not the Government good Reason thus to discourage the Importation of Brandy and other *French* Goods, when the *French* allow not Importation of our Herrings and other Goods to *France*? This is also done to encourage our own Manufactures, which is very much the Interest of *Great Britain*. I do also own Customs on some Goods necessary and allowed to be imported, are heavier now than formerly; yet this is what the necessary Expences of the Government has forc'd the King and Parliament to lay on them: And shall Subjects dispute the Matter? In fine, Duties on Goods are generally heavier now over all *Europe* than they have been some fifty or sixty Years ago, which has been chiefly occasioned by the Wars. Many other Nations also, to encourage their own Manufactures, which now a-Days are more look'd after than in the last Age, do

either absolutely prohibite, or impose vast Duties on several Goods, to discourage importing them. The same Reasons ought to take place with us as much as with any other Nation. But further, shall we grudge to give a little of our Money to preserve our Religion, Liberty and Property; when many of the poor enslav'd Nations about us, are constrain'd to give, for Tribute the very necessary Support of themselves and Families, whereby they enable those lawless Tyrants, to make them yet much more miserable? But further, 'tis well known that they run Goods which pay a very small and reasonable Duty, as *Lint, &c.* I could give Instances of this, and when they have done, I have heard them say, it was not worth their Pains.

7. A Necessity of running is often pleaded from this, *That the Goods run were such as could not be enter'd, because absolutely prohibited, and so no Entry could be received.*

The Answer given to the 6th may take off this, but I add, tho' I believe some of them are such, yet not all Goods that are run; but can this excuse their imbezling them? when they knew that before they bought them, they willingly brought themselves

selves under that Necessity, and if they knew not, which I am sure seldom happens, they should rather throw them in the Sea, than run them, and swear falsely.

8. I understand that some, to justify their stealing from the Government, do say, *If it be a Sin, why do not Ministers more freely reprove it, and tell us this plainly?*

Ans. Did you ever consult them about it? No, I'll warrant, you have no Scruples that Way, tho' sure, at least, you ought to account the Matter dubious; and I'm confident, there are some who are most guilty, that tho' an Angel from Heaven should reprove and warn them of their Danger, let be Ministers of the Gospel, they would not amend. I know also that some in Prayers and Preachings, have gall'd them by testifying against their Sin; and as I wish, so I hope all honest Ministers will unanimously witness against it, and Wo will be to them that do not, if any such be found. I know some who are grievously persecuted for their Freedom about this: But 'tis so plain an Injury to the Government, that, tho' no Minister did preach against it, Men that have any

common Knowledge, can't but see the Sin of it, especially of the Swearing that follows on the embezzling the Goods.

9. I doubt not many are harden'd in it, with long Impunity and Success, they are Masters of this Black-Art, there is no discovering of all their Frauds and Tricks, they prosper strangely, and heap up Riches in a short Time, and they'll tell, *That those who will not imbezle and swear falsely, as they do, make little or no Profit at all.*

Have such forgot that † *All Things happen alike unto all, Love or Hatred cannot be known by these Things, the Tabernacles of Robbers prosper,* as is told us in sacred Write? Yea a Heathen Poet could say,

*— Careat successibus opto,
Quisquis ab eventu facta notanda putat.*

Ovid. Ep. Phyll. ad Demoph.

Success or Want of Success in a Course, is a very unsafe Rule, by which to judge of the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness thereof. And it's far from being universally true, that these scandalous Smuglers do always prosper, and Fair-Traders not; I could give manifest Instances of both to the contrary. Not a few of the pilfering thievish

† Eccl. ix. 2. Job. xii. 6.

vish Fellows turn Bankrupt, and some of the most conscientious remarkably prosper.

These are the common *Pleas* made use of to defend this scandalous Practice. Now would Men without Prejudice and Partiality examine Things calmly, and weigh them in the Ballance of sound Reason and of the Sanctuary, and consider what they are doing in this, they might easily be convinced and see, that nothing imaginable could excuse it; yea, that all the Defences can be adduced, are such, as they justly may be asham'd of. Few will talk of them in common Conversation, it's ordinarily among themselves these Things are whisper'd, and not a few of the guiltiest of them will shift to defend the Practice openly; therefore if possible to perswade People of the Sinfulness of it, and to reform this, I shall point at the Evil of it.

I. Then, consider how great Hurt is done, by imbeziling Goods, to the fair Traders that pay the Duties to the Government. Their Trade is quite broke with it, since they are able to under-sell them, and commonly do so, and get ready Payment often on the Delivery of the Goods, which the other cannot. They sell
cheap

cheap often to get the Goods out of their Possession when they fear a Search, and they urge present Payment of the Money, lest the Persons, after they find the Goods were not entred, give them any Trouble. By this you may see how much fair Traders suffer, and their Trade must sink, and so be forced to steal, as others do, or be great Losers; and therefore as they deserve Encouragement from the Government, so the strickest Ways possible should be taken to crush the thievish and destructive Tricks of these Smuglers.

II. What a Sin is it against the supreme Magistrate and the Government? Is not this a plain denying to *Cæsar* what is *Cæsar's*? I believe there's no Subject that will dispute the Justice of Tribute, or Custom, in the general, to the Magistrate, the Powers ordained of God; but the Mischief on't is, that most of the above-mentioned Excuses, if they could warrant Runing Goods, so would they also denying all Tribute and Custom to the Government. The paying of Tribute or Custom is enjoin'd by the exprefs and plain Command of God, the Letter of the Law; our Saviour the King of Kings enjoins it,

* *Render*

* *Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's*: This was a Part of his Answer to that captious Question of the Herodians, when they asked, *Is it lawful to give Tribute to Cæsar, or not?* Likewise the Apostle Paul presses it much, and 'tis probable Nero was on the Imperial Throne at that Time, † *For this Cause pay you Tribute also*, that is, because you owe them Subjection for Conscience sake. || *They are God's Ministers attending continually on this very thing; render therefore to all their Dues, Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, &c.* He urges it with weighty Arguments, he reiterates and doubles, yea trebles it in various Words. Our Saviour also, by his blessed Example recommends it to all his Followers; in the Days of his Flesh he paid Tribute: And tho' he humbled himself to pay Tribute to ‡ Men, to his own Creatures, to Worms, yet he did it in a way worthy of himself, who was God as well as Man, and demonstrates his Divinity thereby. The very Light of Nature dictates this to be Duty. As Nature's Light has convinced the

* Mat. xxii, 20 † Rom. xiii. 5, 6, 7. || As ver. 5.
 ‡ Mat. xvii. 26, 27.

the Heathens of the Necessity and Advantage of civil Government; so also of the absolute Necessity of supporting it with Part of their Goods for the common and publick Interest of Society; yea in some Cases to venture Life and Fortune *pro Aris & focis*. Among the Heathen it became a proverbial saying, *Pulchrum est pro Patria mori*; even they have avowed *Salus Populi* to be *Suprema Lex*. What a Sin then is this stealing from the Government, since even Nature teacheth that Tribute is due? For every Man's personal Safety is bound up in the publick Tranquillity.

III. 'Tis against themselves, 'tis prejudicial often to their Interest, they suffer by it many ways. 1. They must certainly often bribe Waiters and others too, to connive at it. 2. These in whose Houses the Goods are lodged, and those that assist to run them, often steal much from them, and no Doubt they do it, since they know that Merchants and Mariners are stealing from the Publick, they may, on the same Grounds, think it as lawful to steal from them; and they know 'tis hard to find out who does it, and tho' it were discovered, they dare not challenge them. And indeed they

they have none to blame for it but themselves, who teach them such Morals. 3. Those that assist them, the Boatmen and Carmen, use to exact heavy Wages for their Toil in the Night-Time; so that I have heard some Imbezilers say, better they had enter'd the Goods, and paid the Duties, than run them; at least the Expences of Entry would not have exceeded those of running them. 4. And often after all, the Goods are seized, or at least such Discoveries made, that they are exposed to expensive Processes about them. Therefore on the whole, I am perswaded that Traders through the Kingdom generally Gain not by it, tho' some few particular Merchants do make Profit. 5. What Danger do they run by lying off at Sea in stormy Weather, to play that Game. Boats and Men are sometimes lost, and Ships blown to Sea again, and their Friends in no small Perplexity about them, and sometimes the Ships perish.

IV. 'Tis against their own Deed, and so they are self-condemned; many of them have a Vote in chusing Members of Parliament, who on the justest Grounds, do lay on these Duties on Goods; their Deed is the

the Deed of their Constituents in this, and shall Men controvert and refuse Obedience to these Laws?

Blessed be God, we are a free People, and nothing can be imposed on us without our own Consent in Parliament; tho' we cannot be competent Judges of the several *Quotas* necessary, or of the proper Funds to raise them, but must leave this to the Wisdom of the Grand Council of the Nation. But beside all the Sin in it, and Hurt to their Interest,

V. What a hideous Train of Sins does it draw on? What horrid Iniquity does it tempt them to, beside all that is in it self?
 1. What frequent Lies does it involve them in? Thieves are commonly impudent Liars. For the Proprietars of the Goods will on all Occasions assert, they paid the Duties, and find a Way very often to get Certificates to testify this. Moreover, what Dissimulation and Lies are practised to hide the Goods, and deny the Running of them, by all that assist, or have Accession to the Stealing? Now is deliberate and frequent Lying a small Fault? 2. If they that help to run the Goods, be called to witness against Masters or Merchants, as often they

they are, there is great Ground to fear they will complement their Friends with their Oaths. Instances of plain Guilt this Way have been too common. If it come to an Oath, the Defendants seldom lose the Cause. I have known some that have directed the Witnesses what to depone, and yet the poor Wretches stood not to purge themselves by Oath of partial Counsel, and so were involved in a Perjury, beside the denying any Knowledge of the Runing the Goods, which was another Act of Perjury also. 3. How often is the Lord's-Day lamentably profaned by it? They will run Goods in the Morning or Evening of the Sabbath, and sometimes they transport the Goods to prevent seizing them on the Sabbath-Day. This often draws all the Officers of the Custom-House to wander and watch them, and then the Rabbles rise to hinder seizing the Goods; and then Scolding, Cursing, yea and Fighting are too common amongst them even on the Lord's-Day, beside Neglect of publick Worship, which natively follows on it.

'Tis well known, they are never readier to run Goods, than on *Sabbaths* when the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* is celebrated

ed in Places to which they design to bring them ; for they know, People then are generally fatigued with longer Attendance than ordinary, and therefore they deem it safer for them to play their Game on these Nights. Now, are not here manifold gross Profanations of the *Lord's-Day* occasioned by it ? 4. What Contention and fighting does it breed, betwixt the Custom-House-Officers and the Seamen, and Rabbles that join them ? How often are Persons Wounded, and a Foundation often laid for After-Pleas and Quarrels ; yea, and Murders sometimes committed ? Not long ago at *Falkland*, a Woman was killed in a Tumult that arose about uncushtomed Goods. I hear also that runing Goods was the Occasion of that Murder, the Land-Waiter at *Dundee* was taken up for. Three of the Mob were killed, one at *Allowa*, a second at *Borrowstounness*, and a third at *Dalkeith*, all occasioned by these *Smuglers* runing of Goods, in the Year 1717. Few Sea-Port-Towns, when Goods have been seiz'd, but have seen something of this. Now, is not Murder a crying Sin, and will not God avenge this on the Guilty ? I am perswaded People know not their
 Danger,

Danger, and I'm sure 'tis greater than they apprehend: For if one of the Custom-House-Officers be murdered by them, the whole Rabble present at it may be by Law pursued criminally for the Murder: And tho' many of the Mob be killed by the Officers, in seizing the Goods, and in Defence of themselves, they will be assolizied. I wish therefore, People would consider how great their Danger is in this. Now these that run the Goods are justly chargeable with all the Sin and Sorrow that follows on it. 5. Many of the greatest Embezlers are known to be very apt to Defraud and Trick others, they are commonly reputed cheating Fellows. This needs not seem strange, since cheating and stealing are much of Affinity, and both are Breaches of the Eighth Commandment. Therefore 'tis probable, their stealing thus from the Government does dispose them who are the most infamous Smuglers, to defraud the Owners of their Ships. Whatever Profit many of these make, they have a dexterous Way of making their Discharge Ballance the Charge to purpose; none understand *Skipper-Craft* better than these clever Sparks do, and yet so lofty are some

some of the modern Set, that they'll rage if you call them *Skippers*. 6. But the blackest Part of the dismal *Scene* that opens to us on this, is but to begin, I mean the damnable notorious Perjuries deliberately committed on many Occasions at the Custom-Houses by Merchants and Mariners, especially Ship-Masters that swear the Custom-House Oath at the Entry of their Ships. Now that all may understand this, I shall insert the Oaths themselves.

REPORT INWARD.

Port of ——— in the Ship ———
 British built, Property all British,
 about ——— Tuns, with ——— Men,
 which are all British Men, and ———
 Boys, besides ——— British Man Ma-
 ster for this present Voyage from ———

Follows the Quantity, Quality, Marks
 and Numbers of all the Goods, with the
 Merchants Names to whom they belong,
 which is subscribed by the Master.

NOTE, The Officers of the Custom-House do ob-
 lige Ship-Masters in a most solemn way to make Faith
 when the Oath is tender'd to them, on the Report
 Inward and Outward. Also,

When

When the Master is a *Scotsman*, they cause him hold up his Hand, according to the scriptural and laudable Rite in taking an Oath, and cause him repeat the Words following, you swear by God, and as you shall Answer to God at the great Day, you shall make true Answer to all such Questions as shall be asked you, with Respect to this Voyage, and shall declare the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, without any Equivocation, mental Evasion, or secret Reservation whatsoever; and then the Collector and Comptroller say, S. W. by the Oath you have taken, you do swear, That &c.

The O A T H.

You do swear that the Entry above written now tender'd and subscribed by you, is a just Report of the Name of your Ship, it's Burden, Built, Property, Number and Country of Mariners, the present Master and Voyage; and that it further contains a true Account of your Loading, with the particular Marks, Numbers, Quantity, Quality and Consignment of all the Goods and Merchandizes in your said Ship, to the best of your Knowledge or Belief: And that you have not broken Bulk, or delivered any Goods out of the said Ship since her Loading in the foresaid Port of — otherwise than is particularly above expressed: And that in case you find any other Goods aboard not mentioned in this Manifest, you will

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make

make further Declaration thereof, and not suffer them to be landed without a Warrant from the Custom-House. . So help me G O D.

And the Master is obliged to answer to any other Question relating to the Voyage which the Collector or Comptroller think necessary for expiscating the Truth about these Matters.

The Master, after he hath sworn the Oath, subscribes it. Now you may see the Oath is very comprèhensive and particular, 'tis calculated to obviate all the Chicanes can be used by perfidious Men. How choaking then may it be to these Masters that can run Goods, and afterwards come to swear it? What Evasion can they dream of, to satisfy and persuade themselves that they are free of a horrible Perjury? When they swear, 1. That 'tis a just Report, &c. they give in. 2. That they have not broken Bulk, or &c. otherwise than is above exprest. 3. In case they find any other Goods aboard, &c. that they shall declare it to &c. I say, if they have embezled any Goods, what Shift or Delusion can make their Consciences easy about it, after all the three, viz. two Affertions

fertions and one Promise on Oath? What Ignorance and Impudence then is it for any after they have stoln the Goods aſhoar, to pretend Innocence when they have ſworn the Oath? I know indeed they are allowed to except breaking Bulk, when 'tis for neceſſary Relief either to the Ship or Crew at Sea, or if driven in to any Place in their Voyage, and then they muſt condeſcend particularly what Goods they have ſold; and that Clause in the Oath, otherwiſe than is particularly above expreſt, will include it. But all breaking of Bulk beſide this will involve in a plain Perjury, except they mention it in the Report of the Goods; and I never heard of one that was touch'd with Remorſe then, and did diſcover it. Again, tho' they ſhould not break Bulk till they have enter'd the Ship and ſworn the Oath, they are guilty by the firſt Aſſertion of a Perjury; for 'tis not a juſt Report and true Account to their Knowledge, as they did depone, and 'tis a breach of the Promise in the Oath, that they ſhall declare to the Cuſtom-Houſe what other Goods they find aboard than they mentioned in their Report.

Many other ways, by this Oath, Men may be guilty of Perjury. For if, 1. They conceal any thing of the real Burden of the Ship, they are perjur'd, since you see, they swear the Burden of the Ship; and it has been often found, that Skippers have conceal'd somewhat of the Burden from their Owners. I could name some that have been convicted of it after they had sail'd their Ships some Years, and paid soundly for their Knavery, as they deserved: And of late I have learn'd, that some do conceal a sixth Part, yea some a fifth of the real Burden of their Ships, which can be documented.

2. If the Ship is not *British* built, and yet the Master swears by the Oath that it is, 'tis a down-right Perjury. 'Tis well enough known that some have found a way to get their Ships declar'd *British* built, tho' they were built in foreign Parts. I know severals who bought Ships built in the East Country, who after one Custom-House had refused to let them swear, yet found a way to get the Ships declared free *British* Ships, by swearing that they were built in *Britain*. I knew another who not long ago attempted this with a Ship that

was

was foreign built, but was disappointed. The occasion of which was, he offered to subscribe the Oath requir'd, but refus'd to swear the Words of the Oath. I was mightily surprized with this, that he would sign an Oath which he would not swear, since he was repute a very sober moral Man otherways, and yet this Man is trading on with this Ship, as a free *British* Ship, and every time he swears the Oath, is perjur'd. What way since, he has got that Ship declar'd a free *British* Bottom, I know not.

3. If any one Foreigner have a Property in the Ship, the Master swears falsely, since Property all *British* is a Part of the Report which he swears. Now, how common is it, that foreign Factors and Merchants have Property in our Ships, and yet the Skipper swears the Oath?

4. In the Oath they swear the Account of the Master. Now, 'tis no secret that some Ships have come upon the Coast, and have run great Quantities of Goods, and deforced all Custom-House Officers that attempted to come aboard of them, and afterwards have gone abroad and brought home a new Loadening, or gone

to some other Port to Enter some few Goods that might be safely reported ; and in this Case have made another of the Crew pretend to be Master, and swear it at the Custom-House, and the real Master has conceald himself by pretending to be Mate or a common Seaman, or as Merchant and Super-Cargo.

5. In this Oath, Masters always swear the Port, that is, an Account of the Place from whence they brought the Goods that particular Voyage. Now, if the Master shall lie and conceal the true Port he comes from, and pretend he comes from another, then he is manifestly perjur'd. And this, I shall let you see, is frequently done, when they see they can make a little Profit, and cheat the Government ; of which take an Instance or two.

1. When *Dales* are brought from *Norway*, they deny it on Oath at the Custom-House, and report on Oath, that the Ship came from some *Swedish* Port. The Reason of it is, the *Dales* from *Norway* are valued by the Government at 5 *l. sterl.* the Hundred, and pay 24 *s. sterl.* of Duty ; whereas the Merchants themselves are allowed on Oath to value the *Swedish Dales*, and

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commonly they value them only at 3 *l. sterl.* which is but 10 *s.* more, as the one Half of the Value of the *Norway* Dales, tho' the other are worth the Double of these: For the *Swedish* are far larger, and they pay much less Duty for them, very near 10 *s. sterl.* less for the Hundred Dales. Now hereby, 1st, The Master swears that he came from another Port, than he really came from; then the Merchant values the Dales on Oath, that they are not *Norway*, but *Swedish* Dales; and this he does for a little Advantage to himself. Now it's very common, to cheat the Government thus; for how many Ships come from *Norway* every Year, loaden for the most Part with Dales?

2. They dissemble the Voyage at the Entry of *French* Wines; this also is very frequent and notorious. When Ships import *French* Wines, the Master swears it is *Spanish* Wine, and that he came from *Bilboa*, or *Sc.* That which tempts them to this deliberate and downright Perjury, is this; the Government has for very good Reasons, laid great Duties on *French* Wine, and the Duties on *Spanish* Wine being much easier in *Scotland*, it is past for such
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without any controuling it by the Taste : For no *Scot's* Jury will condemn it, as being entred under a wrong Denomination, tho' the Tasters should depone it is *French* Wine, which a Jury in *England* always does. Now they sell it for *French* Wine, and all know they came from *France*; the Mariners scruple not to own it; and yet the Wretch the Master does swear two Lies, *viz.* that he came from *Spain*, and that it is *Spanish* Wine. This Perjury is peculiar to our People, and the indelible Reproach of *North-Britain*.

I know several Ships that brought home such Wine of late, the Masters whereof swore in the Terms abovementioned; and as is well known, they had run so much of the Wine before, that they scarce had so much aboard as ballast the Ships, to cause them sail into a Harbour: By which the Masters, these faithless Wretches did miserably perjure themselves. Yea, scarce comes there a Ship from *France* with Wine, but the Master swears he came from *Spain* with it. Of late, I'm certainly inform'd of an *English* Vessel that came from *France* with Wine, and some other Goods to an *English* Port, where they entred some of their
 , Load-

Loading for *French* Goods, and he that was the Master swore the Oath at the Custom-House. Afterwards they sail'd for the Frith of *Forth*, and an *English* Water aboard, and there the Mate of the Ship pretended to be Master, came and offer'd an Entry of the Wine, and to swear that he brought it from *Spain*, tho' the Master in his Report in *England*, had deponed that the Ship came from a *French* Port.

But the *English* Waiter discover'd to the Commissioners of the Customs the Master's Report, who thereupon did so teaze the Mate with choaking Queries about it, that his Conscience began to check him, on which he made a full Discovery, and disclos'd all the Villany, and so declin'd to swear, tho' he offer'd frankly at first; which he had certainly done, if the Commissioners had not gone wisely to Work, and prevented him.

R E P O R T O U T W A R D S.

Follows an Account of the Goods, &c. as has been told in the Report Inwards, signed by the Master.

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The O A T H.

You do swear that the Entry abovewritten, now tendered and subscribed by you, is a just Report of the Name of your Ship; it's Burden, Built, Property, Number, Country of Mariners, the present Master and Voyage. And further, that it does contain a true Account of your Loading, with the particular Marks, Numbers, Quantity, Quality and Property of all the Goods and Merchandises in your said Ship, to the best of your Knowledge and Belief. And that you will not suffer to be re-landed or unshipt in order to be re-landed in any Part of Great-Britain, any certificate Goods which you have on Board, nor take in any more Goods for this present Voyage, without duly entring and adding the same to this Report.

Subscribed by the Master, as the other Oath.

Now, beside all the Ways common to this with the former Oath, there are several others by which People may be guilty of the Breach of this; as may be seen by the Tenor of the Oath. Not only may they perjure themselves, as to the Burden, Built, Property, &c. as in the Report In-

wards;

wards ; but the greatest Wickedness as to this second Oath, is, for the Mariners and Merchants to unship or re-land certificate Goods, such as foreign Salt or Tobacco, for which they get a large *Draw-Back* or *Premium* from the Government. By this the Master and Merchants to whom the Goods belong, who commonly act in Concert about it, are dreadfully perjur'd, as you shall hear, and the Government suffers incredible Loss.

You see in the Oath, by re-landing or un-shipping the said Goods, the Master is guilty of a plain and direct Breach of it, if he do but so much as connive at it. Now when these Goods are re-landed, the Merchants usually are the Contrivers of it, and entice Masters to do it ; so that the Merchants are principally guilty in this, and guilty of a double Perjury ? 'Tis undeniable they cannot have their Debentures, till they swear for it ; at which they never demur, if the Goods run, be not discovered. When a Merchant designs to export *Foreign Salt*, &c. he condescends upon the Ship, Master and Place in and from which it was imported, and the Time the Duty was paid, and Excise secured :

cured : And then there is a *Warrant* given for shipping it outwards. Upon which *Warrant* the Merchant swears, that all the Salt he enters for Export, to be shipt on board such a Ship, is the very same for which Duty is paid, and Excise secured, as exprest in the *Warrant*. And when the Ship is sail'd, he demands a *Debenture* to draw back the Duty and Excise. In which *Debenture* the Quantity really shipt is condescended upon, and he swears that all that Salt so condescended upon, is really and truly shipt to Parts beyond Seas, and not again landed nor intended to be landed in any Part of *Great-Britain*.

I am credibly inform'd of several horrid Villanies committed about swearing for Herrings; &c. of which I shall give the following Instances. Some few Years ago, one came from *Leith* to the Clerk of a Coast-Side Town, and told he behoved to have an Attestation for forty Lasts of Herrings he had made at *Cellar-Dyke*. The Clerk did, and that not obscurely, drop a Suspicion : However, he told him, that he could not have it, unless first some Officer of the Custom-House were called to be witness to it: (For at that Time, to pre-

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vent Frauds and Villanies, the Commissioners had ordered this to be done) accordingly the Clerk with this pretended Herring-Monger, but real Villain, with two others, *Knights of the Post*, whom he had hired to swear, came to the Collector. He begins to pose them with Questions; the Villain was discovered and confounded, and his two Hirelings shrinkt away, seeing the Trick found out. The Collector gave him many hard Words, and told him, he deserved to be stigmatized, and have his Ears cut out of his Head, and let him go, and glad he was so to escape.

Of late also I heard another Instance of horrid Impiety in this. A certain Merchant sends his Trustee with two others to swear for an Attestation for a great many Lasts of Herrings. Both of them made Faith, and solemnly swore they should faithfully declare how the Herrings were cured. And when they were interrogate further, they refused to depone that they were cured with foreign Salt only, which paid the Duty to the King, or that this was secured. Shortly after they are brought back again, and took the Oath the second Time, but refused as formerly; yea,

yea, one of them in plain Terms declared, he knew they were only re-packt with great Salt, and said he would never swear otherwise to please any Man. On which the Magistrate and Clerk call'd them *Villains* and *Rogues*, and said, why did they make Faith, since they knew they could not, and were not resolved to swear for the Attestation? And gave them two so much Trouble? But behold, the third Time other two are brought to another Magistrate, and they went briskly to Work indeed, and swore without Wit, Fear, Shame or Conscience to the above Effect, and procured their Master the Attestation, tho' it was well known they were all small Salt Herrings. Those who were Witnesses of it, told this Tragical Story with Regrate.

I hear likewise, it was lately represented to some concerned in the Customs, that a Ship on the *Fife* Side, loaden with foreign Salt to be exported, after she was out of the Harbour, re-landed some Hundreds of Pocks of Salt, each probably containing about three Bushels at least. And this may often be done.

It has been also known, that some have sent off Barrels of Bear for great Salt Herrings, which could not be done without the Connivence of a Surveyor and Land-Waiter.

The prodigious Frauds committed at *Inverness*, has made a great Noise. Whole Ships laden with Herrings, and entred at the Custom-House, and yet no such Ships or Masters to be found, which the Commissioners of the Customs, we hear, have lately discovered.

There have also been very pregnant Presumptions, That some have ballasted their Ships, and above this put a Bugdalen, and then Slotted their Ships with great Salt, and the faithless Master and Merchant pretends the Ships are wholly laden with the said Salt, and swear it to be so.

Now after such solemn Oaths, such Encouragement given by the Government to fair Traders, and such various Instances of villainous Perjury ; What a Pity is it, that there is not a severe Punishment allowed by Law, to be inflicted on such desperate and devilish Rogues as practise or attempt so base a Cheat on the Government, and involve others as well as themselves, in the
most

most abominable Perjuries that can be! Such unaccountable Knavery and Perjury ought to be exemplarily and severely punished, since the Crime is so great, and the Draw-back allowed on Fish exported, exceeds the Duty of foreign Salt imported; and also since by unshipping these certificate Goods, they may make the Government often pay Drawback for the same. 'Tis too well known, that some of no Reputation have long driven this Trade. I heard of Process commenc'd against some for runing Tobacco exported, for which they had paid soundly, had they not found a Way to convey the Witnesses off.

I can't think that Masters are generally guilty of this; but I know some harden'd, profligate Wretches, not inferiour to any Knight of the Post that have dared to practise this Villany, and have been forced to abscond when it was like to take Wind. One particularly I know, whose Friends pretended he was gone abroad, and Letters were feigned to come thence from him; whereas it was well known he was at home all that Time, and was in Danger by a Process. I heartily wish they may hear the Language of the Judgments that have

have overtaken them and their Friends since. What Danger of Shipwreking their Souls eternally are Persons in by such Courses? I am greatly afraid many of them will scarce get a Plank to escape drowning.

III. Beside the Perjuries ordinary at Entries of Ships, there is, alas! an abominable one, too common with many Merchants and Seamen relating to Fishes or Fleshes cured with foreign Salt. The Law obliges all to swear before they can obtain that Write they call a Debenture, without which they cannot have Draw-back in *Scotland* when they export them.

I. The Persons that cure the Fishes Herrings, &c. or Beef and Pork, do depone before the Magistrates where they live, or in the nearest Burgh, (to get an Attestation from them of the Fishes or Fleshes being so cured) that they were cured with foreign Salt, without any Mixture of *British* or *Irish*; and these are commonly Servants, of whom not a few are so ignorant and mercenary, that they may be easily tempted by their Masters or Mistresses, for a small Bribe, to perjure themselves. How often is there Ground to fear that severals do this, for the great Profit of

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the Drawbacks! This Attestation the Merchant gives in to the Custom-House, when he enters them, and gets a Warrant for shipping them. 2. This is not all in the Bargain, tho' alas! 'tis too dear bought already; but e're they obtain their Debentures for Goods of this Nature exported, the Exporter or his Agent must come and depone afterward when the Ship is sail'd, That the Herrings, &c. were so cured, as said is; as also that for that very Salt they were cured with, his Majesty's Duties have been paid, or secured, and not drawn back: And except they will depone both, they cannot have their Debentures, &c. Now if they have sworn, or caused Servants to swear the first Oath, they use not to stand at the second themselves. And if, to their Knowledge, there was the least Mixture of *British* or *Irish* Salt, both the Makers and Proprietars are in a Perjury. Moreover, as to the second Part of this last Oath, *viz.* That the excise of the Salt was paid or secured; I cannot see how any can depone this that buys Salt from others that say they have Excised it, tho' they had seen it done, if it was a while in their Custody, afterwards, since the Salt might be changed,

or

or Salt not excised mixed with it. Such base Tricks are often known to be done; were not some even taken in the Fang, carrying off unexcised Salt, and 'tis known escaped what they deserved, tho' it cost them dear, and the unhappy Men that conniv'd at it, paid soundly for their Fault? The Jurant is not allowed to add that Restriction when he swears, *That to the best of his Knowledge the Excise of the Salt was paid or secured*, but must peremptorly and absolutely assert that it was paid, &c. which scarce any can swear for Salt in another's Custody.

Yea, there are some of so bad Repute for all infamous Tricks of stealing and swearing falsely, that none can doubt of their running some of their Salt; so that those that buy from them cannot with a good Conscience swear, *That to the best of their Knowledge and Belief, the Salt they made use of was excised*: Therefore if People were as wary in this as they ought, they should still Excise the Salt themselves which they buy. I must do Justice to severals of my Acquaintances, to own they are careful to fulfil the Law, and take the nicest Care to see their Herrings or, &c. cured with foreign Salt without

any Mixture, and will not buy Salt, except they be allowed to pay the Excise themselves. These can with a good Conscience depone to obtain their Debentures, as the Law requires: But, alas! 'tis far otherwise with many; we may tremble to think how common Perjuries in this Matter are in many Places. 'Tis too well known, that often there are strong and pregnant Presumptions to fear, that some do pine their Fishes, Herrings, &c. with small Salt, and only in packing them bestow a little foreign Salt on them in the two Ends of the Barrel, and yet stand not boldly to swear, they were cured as the Law requires. Magistrates that give the Attestations, and Neighbours know, there is often Ground to inspect some for this Perjury and cheating the Government; but the Law provides no Remedy, nor do I see how it could be altogether prevented. I heard an amazing Instance of such Tricks from the *Fife* Side of the Firth some while ago; one that made Herrings had but four Bolls of foreign Salt, and yet swore for five Lasts of Herrings cured as the Law requires, for which he got Debentures; and yet 'tis known, tho' they bestow it frugally,

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ly, it could not cure a Last and a half well. What a Loss then is this to the Government, but, Oh! what dear bought Gain to the Merchant? Now how common may this be among base People!

IV. Another Sort of Perjury is now come in Fashion, since the Malt-Tax was laid on. Merchants finding that, because this Duty is not paid, they cannot have Draw-back on Malt in North Britain, as they have on Bear exported, and that sometimes the Malt sells better abroad than Bear; therefore they enter Malt at the Custom-House for Bear, and swear that it is Bear. This has been pretty common these two or three Years past; and the poor Wretches satisfy their Consciences with this, that once it was Bear. Whether will they go at this rate!

V. A fifth Occasion of Perjury among Mariners and Merchants, is about the Business of *Insurances*. 'Tis true the Custom-House has nothing to do with this. In time of War it was usual to write to foreign Factors or Merchants, and insure either Goods, or Parts of Ships, or whole Ships. They name a definite Sum, which they Insure; and the *Insurance-Masters* get

a *Premium* or Reward of so much in the Hundred, in case the Goods or Ship so insured be safely landed at the Port designed; and if they be lost, they must pay the Sum insured. When Ships are old, or in the Winter Season, 'tis very usual, even yet in time of Peace to Insure; but often it is a costly Bargain to some, e're they can obtain their Money. For the Master and some of the Seamen must give their *Affidavits* before a Magistrate about the particular Voyage, their Bills of Loading and the time of the Ships sailing, if the Cargo or the Ship and it both be lost: Also they must make *Affidavit* before some Magistrate, where they were Shipwreckt, how the Wind then blew, and that it was by no Fault of the Sailers, if the Insurance-Masters require it; but if the Men be lost also, there's no need nor place for this last *Affidavit*. And in case the *Insurance-Masters* object, that Insurance was not made till they got notice of the Ship's being lost; they must purge themselves by Oath of this also. Now there are very pregnant Presumptions that some have not insur'd till they were advised of the Ship's being lost: As also, that sometimes more is insured on Ship or Goods

Goods than they are worth, for which the Insurance-Masters can have their Oath, if they suspect either of these. And tho', I hope, the generality of Masters and Merchants are innocent of these notorious cheating Tricks and plain Perjuries that follow on them; yet Men that are accustomed to Embezzling and Perjuries, are certainly in great Danger to Sin at this rate, to obtain a round and swinging Sum: And as there's no doubt some are guilty, so they will find Magistrates enough that will collude with them. I know a certain Master, who had an old Vessel, he and his Owners were willing to lose; a goodly Sum is insur'd on it, he sails the Ship with Ballast a short way from home on the Coast; the Seamen divined, without help of the Stars the Event of this Voyage; they left their very Chests ashoar, which they don't in time of War; a Way was found in fair Weather to be deliver'd of the old *Hulk* deeply insur'd: The Men came ashoar pleasantly at their own leisure, and made *Innuendos* enough to their Friends, and yet they would swear, as said is, the Ship was lost without any Fault of theirs, if put to it.

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Now I doubt not but these criminal Traders in Perjury, yea habitual Perjury that some live in, have Excuses for it to please and to make themselves easy about it, and to entice others to swear falsely; but these are all but vain and deceiving Words, and without the sleight of Satan and strong Delusion, 'tis impossible they could take with any reasonable Creature. 'Tis probable many of the same Suggestions that entice to the stealing, will allure to secure the stolln Goods by a Perjury, otherwise the Master's runing the Goods were in vain.

1. One Pretence for it I have heard is, The Law is so strict, the Oath to be sworn is so comprehensive, that no Master can escape doing something that is inconsistent with it every Voyage, let him be as cautious as is possible; if there be but a Trifle concealed, he is guilty of false swearing: And therefore we need not stand, say they, to swear it, after we have run Goods.

Ans. 1. By this, you may see, there is a malicious Thrust at the Government for imposing the Oath. I do indeed believe they are no Gainers by it, the Design
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of it is not reached, and therefore I wish, if it could be, it were not in use at the Entry of Ships ; but this is what the Government will not abate. 2. I have let you see above, that you are allowed in the Report even to except breaking of Bulk in some Cases. 3. 'Tis ridiculous to pretend that no Master can be so free of runing or concealing Goods, that with a good Conscience they can take the Oath ; 'tis altogether groundless, for I know some who are so innocent of runing Goods, that they could safely do it. But what People are not a mind to mend, they will often account impossible.

2. I understand, some alledge Ministers do not speak freely on this Point, and tell them the Evil of these Perjuries which are so common.

Ans^w. I'm sure that some Ministers use much freedom in this Matter. Many testify faithfully against these Perjuries in Trade, both by Prayers and Preachings, and at Sacraments debar the Guilty doctrinally from the Lord's Table ; and could they get plain Instances of it instructed against them, would not suffer them to partake of sealing Ordinances ; or if Sessions did it, it
would

would not want a Testimony against it, either by a Dissent recorded, or an Appeal to a superior Judicatory. If any Ministers be silent about this, they have the Blood of their People on their Head, and of their Hand will God require it: For when People are guilty and Ministers silent, it cannot but be a snare to them, since they are industriously seeking a Blind to their own Consciences. But I am persuaded they are but few, if any, who can be charged with this sinful Silence; and tho' some Ministers were actually guilty of it, will that excuse these Men? Since any that has common Sence, or any competent Knowledge of the Principles of Religion, may see the Impiety there is in such undeniable Perjuries; when Men swear a Lie, and what their Consciences know to be false. I am sure, at least, they have reason to doubt if swearing at this rate be lawful; and when Persons doubt, should they not consult others about the Matter, who are most capable to give them Light? Now, I dare challenge all of them to give an Instance of a Man, either Mariner or Merchant, that ever applied to Ministers

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sters for Advice, and they refused to point out the Sin to them.

3. I fear, tho' they will not speak it out, that in swearing these Oaths, some wicked Wretches do use *Equivocations* or mental *Reservations*, that is, they understand some Words otherwise than the genuine, plain, and common Sense or Meaning of the Words import or will allow, or in their Minds, they except the stolen Goods when they swear the Custom-House Oaths at entring of Ships, tho' not expressed; and that such base *jesuitical hellish Salvos* Men make use of in the rest of the Oaths to cheat their own Consciences with, notwithstanding they have, even upon Oath, disclaim'd these base Quirks.

Ans. But this is absolutely inconsistent with common Candour and Ingenuity, an open violence to a natural Conscience, and tends directly to elude the Design of all Oaths. This antichristian Hypocrisy, which is the Reproach of the Christian Name, is avowed by none but *Papists*, the Principle is peculiar to none but *Rome*, 'tis a part of the cursed Morals taught by popish Priests and Jesuits, these infernal Locusts; away then with it to *Rome* and *Hell* whence

whence it came! None but the stupidly Ignorant, or desperate Offenders, will attempt to make themselves easy with this. But can Men face the awful *Tribunal of God* with such pitiful Quirks? Will these miserable Defences be sustained by him who is Truth and Holiness it self, and no Respector of Persons?

4. Some are so childish as to plead, when they have run Goods they are then under a Necessity of swearing for them, otherwise if they don't, they'll be quite broke and undone.

Answ. I have already made it convincingly appear, that they are under no Necessity to run their Goods, yea there is a World of Sin in it, and follows on it; and therefore this is but a meer Pretence. 'Tis strange to hear People plead a Necessity for swearing, &c. because they have run the Goods; Did they not design to run them before they bought them? Either the Importation of the Goods they bought is absolutely prohibite, or Customs imposed on them so great, to discourage Importation, that they knew they could not make Profit except they would run them; and this is what they design to do every Voyage,

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Voyage, if they can get such Goods to run. Moreover, suppose they had never heard of the Custom-House-Oath before they had run the Goods, how can there be any imaginable Necessity of committing so great a Sin, to reach a little Profit which they propose to themselves? Will they do Evil, that Good may come of it? Yea, will they commit one of the greatest Sins, rather as suffer a little Loss? The *Moral-Law* is holy and strict, allows of no Sin, Degree or Appearance of it whatsoever, nor Excuse for it; and it's a distinguishing Principle of Religion, and essential to it, that we must rather suffer the worst Affliction, than commit the least Sin.

5. Some while ago, I have heard some so impudent as to say, they swore no Oath at all at the Custom-House, they only sign'd it, and this was a very common Defence among them.

Ans. 1. They know that now, as is above narrated, they are made solemnly to swear the Oath, as well as subscribe it. 2. I would ask such in cold Blood, do you, or did you ever think it lawful to sign a Lye, suppose it were not asserted in the Terms
of

of an Oath; and if not, could you dare to sign a plain and exprefs Lie in a solemn Oath? 3. Did you not give a Bow, as a Sign of your Assent to the Words repeated to you, as was requir'd by those that tender'd the Oath? And this Sign of Assent, is all that's commonly requir'd of Parents at the Baptism of their Children, when they solemnly engage for their Education; and if you thought your Bowing in the first Case brought you under no Tye of an Oath, no doubt you may imagine yourselves as little engag'd, by your Bowing in the other. 4. Did not the Collector and Comptroller both, by their Subscriptions, attest that you had sworn the Oath, at the Entry of Ships?

But besides Merchants and Seamen, there are others also very guilty in this Matter. The Officers of Custom-Houses, such as *Collectors*, *Comptrollers*, especially the *Surveyors*, *Land-Waiters* and *Tide-Waiters*, who might prevent much of the Frauds committed by Merchants and Mariners, as to runing Goods, &c. were they truly faithful, as they ought to be. But alas! How far are many of them from that? What notorious Unfaithfulness are many

many found guilty of? This is what the *Fair-Traders* daily complain of, and all generally on the Sea-Coast know is too true. What Troubles have the Commissioners of the Customs of late got with notorious Instances of their Knavery and Villany in this, and with the restless Sollicitations of partial Men, in Favour of these Rogues. Now you will see, when they are admitted to their Office, they are solemnly sworn by the Oath *de fideli*. That the Charge of Perjury and Accession to it, may be the more evident against these Officers, I have set down the Oath it self, and shall make some few Reflections and Observations upon it.

Oath to be taken by the Officers of the Customs, at their Admission to their Office.

You do swear,

That you shall truly and faithfully execute, to the best of your Knowledge and Power, your several Trusts and Employments committed to your Charge and Inspection, and that you will not take or receive any Reward or Gratuity, directly or indirectly, other than your respective Salaries,

Salaries, and what is or shall be allowed you from the Crown, or the regular Fees establish'd by Law for any Service done or to be done in the Execution of your Employment in the Customs upon any Account whatsoever.

By this Oath it's evident, 1. That if they be unfaithful to their Knowledge, tho' they take no Reward or Gratuity, they are perjur'd ; if they but connive or wink at Frauds, concert them or go out of the Way, when they suspect they are to be perpetrate. 2. Much more, if they themselves or their Friends for them, to their Knowledge do take a Reward, Gratuity or Bribe, they are guilty ; for they swear, they shall not take it directly or indirectly. 3. If they impose upon Ship-Masters or Merchants, more than the regular Fees establish'd by Law, this is also a plain Breach of their Oath ; and yet how ordinary is it for Collectors, &c. especially Surveyours and Land-Waiters to do so ? tho' at the *Jirking* of a Ship, a *Crown* is all that's due to the Surveyour, they get the Double of it frequently, yea, often a *Guinea*, and if confin'd to their *Crown*, they are not pleas'd, and have openly shew'd not a little Resentment of it against Ship-Masters ;

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sters; of this I could give Instances, but I forbear. 4. By persecuting, reproaching and giving Trouble to honest Men, for their Fidelity in their Office, they are guilty. Sure this is not consistent with the Faithfulness they swear. The few who are very faithful, are a Check on them, they dread them; and therefore hate them, and do them all the Mischief they can. 5. If they will not receive and improve Informations they get of Frauds, this is not consistent with Faithfulness. Some of them are no sooner inform'd, but they transmit the Account to Traders concern'd to defeat the Discovery. 6. If they discourage Informers, who give them certain Accounts of Goods run, or of Frauds, either by Bantering and Male-treating them to their Faces, or Discovering them to Traders, who may give them much Trouble; this none will dare to do, but Arrant, perjur'd Villains.

1. 'Tis certain, the Unfaithfulness of the Officers of the Customs cannot be easily proven by two Witnesses to every Fact; for it's not to be imagin'd, that they will allow any to be Witnesses of what Bargains they make with Traders, but the

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Givers

Givers allanerly ; and these will be loth to discover it, except they are minded to give over Trade. 2. There are many Cases, in which the Law allows a *priviledged Probation* ; and sure in this Case it ought to be allow'd as much as in many, otherwise the Government must suffer daily very much Damage by them. Put the Case, that there are several Instances of great Unfaithfulness a Person is guilty of, and a single Witness to each of them, with many other pregnant Presumptions concurring, is it not very strange, that in such a Case the Commissioners of the Customs may not turn off such Servants? Any Master of a Family would think himself miserably stated, if he might not discard his Servants in such a Case, and shall not the King and Government be at Liberty to turn off theirs for the like, when the publick Good requires it? Will Men pretend Loyalty, and support such Knaves, and interpose with all their Moyen, and daily vex the Commissioners for such Men ; yea, and perhaps threaten them also, if they will not abandon the Interest of the Government so far as to pass them when convicted, or repone them when suspended, or send them to another Port ?

I have not heard any of them avowing or defending their Unfaithfulness, yet I have often heard one of them accuse another of it; and commonly, when challenged, they deny it, as boldly as the Traders too; and I'm persuaded, if they were allow'd, to swear their Innocency, they would not scruple to purge themselves by Oath, in the most solemn Manner, tho' many of them are guilty to a Degree; therefore the Government may be convinc'd, it is their Interest to have Men of Probity employ'd about the Customs. But not a few inferior Officers of the Customs are profligate *Rakes*, profane Swearers, and Severals of them *Atheistical* Despisers of Worship, neither owning Church nor Meeting-House: Men who are sensual *Drunkards*, yea often drunk while waiting on Ships; and is it then possible they can be capable to discharge their Duty? Sea-Men and Merchants find a Way to make them drunk, that they may get Occasion to play their Cards, and steal the more freely, for then they may do what they please. I have often seen Land-Waiters and Tide-Waiters drunk in this Case, and for this very Fault, they ought to be dismissed.

mist. There are likewise not a few of
 them miserably poor, and being often bro-
 ken Merchants, or Gentlemen's menial
 Servants recommended, this tempts them
 to grip greedily, and to hasten to be
 rich, and stand at no Unfaithfulness, that
 will make Money to them. I know the
 Commissioners of the Customs and Ex-
 cise are to be pitied, they are so plagued
 with Recommendations in Favours of such
 Men. Several of them were *Jacobites* in
 the late Years, and join'd in the Rebellion;
 and yet these Men were recommended by
 some in the Government, when they came
 in, and some of them their Well-Wishers,
 yet remain in these Posts: So that on all
 'tis evident, there is no Hope of reforming
 the Stealing and Perjuries in Trade, except
 there be a Reform among such Officers of
 the Customs, and these Posts better filled
 than some of them are. Great Reason
 have the honoured Gentlemen the Com-
 missioners of the Customs, to look to this,
 and I hope will do so, if they can be rid of
 Sollicitations.

Their Bribery is either direct, when they
 transact with Traders, and offer to con-
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when they or theirs take the Gift or Bribe, and promise nothing, but do the Favour desired effectually. Now Bribery is a wicked, mischievous and ignominious Sin. 'Tis given as a great Evidence of a deplorable State, when those in publick Trust take Gifts or Bribes; † *Thy Princes are rebellious, and Companions of Thieves, every one loveth Gifts, and followeth after Rewards*; * *A wicked Man taketh a Gift out of the Bosom, to pervert the Ways of Judgment.* 1. A Gift is said, || *To blind the Eyes of the Wise, not only of Fools, but even of the Wise, and pervert the Words of the Righteous*; and the wise Man says, ‡ *That a Gift destroys the Heart.* Tho' Persons were resolved not to gratify them by conniving at Frauds, yet they ought not to take Gifts, for this is an Oppression of the Traders. 2. It tempts the Givers to expect your gratifying them in the Terms proposed. 3. They and others that know your taking it, will be stumbled at this, and think you actually do wink at their Frauds; or if otherwise, that 'tis only some Resentment has made the Receiver of their Gift not to connive. 4. If you

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† Isa. i. 23. * Prov. xvii. 23. || Exod. xxiii. 8. Deut. xvi. 19 ‡ Eccl. vii. 7.

take the Gift, there is Danger of yielding; and therefore a Gift is said to be as a † *precious Stone in the Eyes of him that hath it, whithersoever it turns it prospereth.*

2. The Injury you do to the Government is great, it cannot easily be told the Loss the Government sustains by the Unfaithfulness of Officers, both of Excise and Customs, who are concerned in the Revenue, how many Thousand Pounds do such yearly cheat the Government out of?

3. 'Tis a betraying of your Trust; the Government imploies you, when often better Servants might be had, and how ill is the Government requit by you, while it keeps such infamous Men, as you and your Families from starving; who, tho' you are well hired and rewarded for all your Toil and Labour in your Posts, yet think nothing of all this, if you get not Leave to steal from the Traders and the King both?

4. At your Door does the most part of the Frauds committed by Traders, as to runing of Goods, &c. and Perjuries ly.

5. 'Tis in you a horrid Violation of your Oath, and a down-right Perjury, to be accessory any Manner of Way to these Frauds

Frauds and Perjuries of others. On the Evil of this horrid Iniquity, both in Traders and Officers of the Customs, as to this Matter, I shall next insist.

But now I would gladly address all the Guilty, or that are in Danger of being so, and reason the Matter a little with Mariners, Merchants, and Officers of the Customs, about the very great Wickedness there is in the Perjury and false Swearing so common now a Days in the Matter of Trade.

I. Dear Friends and Country-Men, consider seriously what a sacred and tremendous Thing an Oath is ; 'tis the highest and most awful Appeal to God, the Searcher of Hearts, the glorious Judge of the Quick and Dead, of Angels and Men, and the greatest Security among Men ; and the more solemnly it is done, it adds so much to its Weight. By swearing an Oath, you solemnly call upon God to be Witness and Judge of your Sincerity. In swearing either an *Affertory* or *Promissory* Oath, you attest God that knows all Things, touching your Ingenuity, and by your swearing you invoke God to punish you with all the Vengeance false swearing does deserve,
and

and which is threatned against it ; and that Clause usual in tendring Oaths, *As you shall answer to God*, implies both very plainly. Therefore 'tis said, when the *Jews* returned from *Babylon*, did swear their Covenant for Reformation, they entred † into a Curse and an Oath ; there is an Imprecation against themselves, in Case of Perfidiousness implied in the Oath sworn ; and this holds in the Oaths above-mentioned, as well as in Covenants with God. Now then what a Heaven-daring Presumption, what a profane mocking of an Omniscient, holy, and jealous God is it, to swear falsely ? Mind he will be your Judge, and no worse shall befall you than you have called on God to inflict ! May he not say to such perjured Monsters, on this peculiar Account : *Out of your own Mouths will I judge you ?*

II. Perjury or false swearing is a Sin against much Light, and this is a hainous Aggravation of Sin that dreadfully accents it, † *Jesus said to the Pharisees, If you were blind you should have no Sin, but now you say we see, therefore your Sin remaineth :*
 * *And the Servant that knew his Lord's Will,*
 and

* Neh. x. 29. † John ix. 41. * Luke xii. 47.

and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes. In these Oaths mentioned, you full well know, you are swearing gross Untruths, and with a Design to cheat.

1. 'Tis a Sin against the Moral Law, the revealed Will of God; how peremptorily, expressly and frequently is this forbid in the Word? O! that the third Command, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for, &c.* were engraven on your Hearts! An Oath is immediate Worship, 'tis a valuable Part of his glorious Name, his Name is expressly interposed in an Oath, we must only swear by his Name and by no other; and swearing is in Scripture put for the whole of God's Worship, of which it is a considerable Part. Now, you see, taking it in vain, mentioning any Part of his Name but irreverently, not to the Purpose, (of which People may be guilty in Prayer) is expressly prohibite and threaten'd. Sure then Perjury is one of the most atrocious and odious Breaches of this Law of the first Table, and so a Sin immediately against God; † *Now if a Man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?*

2. Yea

|| Deut vi. 13. 10. 20. Jer: iv. 2. † 1 Sam. ii. 25.

2. Yea this is a Sin against Nature's Light; it may be said, Doth not even Nature teach you, that Perjury is a Sin? Heathens own an Oath to be a sacred Thing, and not a few of them have shown a wonderful Veneration for Oaths; some of them have kept their Oaths to others, when under dangerous Temptations to break them. The Consciences of sober Pagans would bogle at such horrid and frequent abominable Perjuries, of which many Traders and Officers of the Customs are guilty. Will not these then be Witnesses against perjured pretended Christians, that play with Oaths? Is the Law of Nature quite blur'd, and have your Consciences lost all Impressions of this Sort, tho' you have Revelation to assist Nature's Light, have you got both trampled among your Feet?

3. How often is it evidently seen, that there is prodigious Atheism at Bottom of it? Every hainous Sin committed on small Temptations, and repeated often, or that the Sinner continues impenitent under, especially when against so much Light as this is, bewrays much Atheism. Do such Heaven-daring Sinners believe there is a God,

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God, that he knows their Sin, will call them to Account for it, as he hath threaten'd, and that he is able to avenge such Disobedience? No, no, they do not. † *These Fools have said in their Hearts, there is no God*; their Perjury is too clear a Document of it; *They are corrupt, they have done abominable Works, &c.*

4. Profaning the Name of God by Oaths, even in customary swearing in common Discourse, much more in solemn Oaths above-mentioned, is accompany'd with much Profaneness, a Deluge of other Sins, of gross Immoralities, especially those Sins that will yield a little worldly Gain, such as lying, cheating, &c. will accompany false swearing in this Case; if you swear falsely for Profit, What Sin will you stand at that will conduce to this End? And commonly the Persons most guilty of these Perjuries are profane Persons, either Masters, Merchants, or Custom-House Officers; What Drunkenness, Sabbath-breach, Contempt of publick Worship, scoffing at Piety, and Uncleaness common among such People? Vices of all Sorts reign among them.

5. How

† Psal: xiv. 1, 2.

5. How often in a Year are some guilty of false swearing at the Custom House, at the Entry of Ships, for Debentures, &c? Is it not enough, and too much by far, once in your Lives to perpetrate this great Sin against God, and your own Souls, but will you often renew and repeat it? Is there so little Sin on your Scores? What an accursed and hellish Trade is this you drive? What complete *Knights of the Post* would many Masters, Merchants and Officers of the Customs make? In no lawful Employ is Perjury so often committed, as you do in yours.

6. How impudently do many of you aver your Innocence, when most guilty? You know the Business is manag'd with such Secresy, it's not easy to find you out in runing the Goods that makes the Perjury in Masters, or the other Tricks that make you guilty, when all in the Place you live in of your own Sort, know you are guilty often, yet you have the Impudence to deny it, if any that abhors such Impiety will charge you with it? † *Were they asbamed, when they had committed Abominatons? They were not at*

† Jer. vi. 15.

all ashamed, neither could they blush.

7. How incorrigibly and obstinately do many go on in it? You often rage at a Reproof of this, as if the greatest Injury were done you. I know some that have dared to challenge Ministers for a general Reproof of such Sins in Trade, without circumstantiating Persons or Acts; yea, even some of the soberest of Mariners have done it, and yet were forced in Reasoning to yield the Point, but still persisted in these Courses. There are many both Merchants and Mariners, who are otherwise very sober and moral Men, that scruple as little at these Oaths, as the loudest Rakes among them; which can't but be very amazing, and give us strange Thoughts of Heart about this.

8. What a Conscience-searing and hardening Sin must it be, since it's against so much Light, and is of so atrocious a Nature? Perhaps the first Time you are guilty, the Conscience may bogle and startle a little at it, but after you have sworn falsely once or twice, you become very easy about it. How low does the Fear of God ebb in your Hearts, that do it often? Such Transgression may say within our
Hearts,

Hearts, † *The Fear of God is not before your Eyes.* Lying does much fear the Conscience, as we are told in the sacred Oracles, speaking Lies in Hipocrisy, *Having their Conscience seared, as with a hot Iron;* and if speaking Lies do so, will not swearing Lies often do it more effectually? I could never hear any of the soberest of you, express the least Remorie for this Sin; nor could I ever learn, that any Minister would own he had heard any such Thing from any of you at Death, even when some have been free about other Sins. I knew one when he had run the Goods and sold them, before he went to enter the Ship, which he knew the Minister of the Place was able to prove; yet when this Man desir'd to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, he would not so much as confess it. What a Possession is this Satan gets of such Men, by these Sins!

9. How great's the Scandal and Offence it gives, when this is so common? Especially, when these that are otherwise more moral than others are found in this Sin, how will it harden Atheists and Infidels? How much does it tempt others to follow their

† Psal. xxxvi. 1.

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their Example? And how grieving is it to the Hearts of all that truly fear God? *Wo to them by whom such Offence come?*

10. This is a Sin the Lord has given terrible Documents of his Displeasure against. How sharply and how frequently is it re-
proved in the Word, and what dreadful Threatnings are there thunder'd out against the false Swearer, of which I shall subjoin a few? 'Tis said, † *He will not hold them guiltless, that take his Name in vain*; that is by a Figure call'd *Meiosis*, he will hold them very guilty, and whatever Men think of it, *Altho' the Breakers of this Command escape Punishment from Men, yet they shall not escape God's righteous Judgement.* The Psalmist puts the Question, * *Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy Place?* And as a Part of the Answer to that weighty Question, he subjoins, *He that hath not lifted up his Soul to Vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.* The Prophet Jeremiah tells the People, ‡ *Because of swearing the Land mourneth.* Likewise the Prophet Hosea speaks to the same Purpose, || *By swearing and lying and stealing,*
&c.

† Exod. xx. 7. * Psal. xxiv. 3. ‡ Jer. xxiii. 10.
 || Hof. iv. 2, 3.

Ec. they break out, — therefore shall the Land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish. † They have spoken Words swearing falsely in making a Covenant, thus Judgement springeth up as Hemlock, in the Furrows of the Field. The Prophet Zechariah concurs in the same Strain with the rest; in a Vision there is discovered to him, * A flying Roll, the Length whereof is twenty Cubits, and the Breath thereof ten Cubits: I will bring it forth saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the House of the Thief, and into the House of him that sweareth falsely by my Name, and it shall remain in the midst of his House, and shall consume it with the Timber and Stones thereof. Now in Verse 3. 'Tis said, This is the Curse that goeth forth over the Face of the whole Earth, The Lord also declares by Malachi, || I will come near to you to Judgment, and I will be a swift Witness against the false Swearer.

Dear Friends and Country-Men, O that you would allow me to deal freely, and expostulate the Matter a little further with your Consciences, about these Things! God is my Witness, 'tis the Love I bear
your

† Hof. x. 4. * Zech. v. 2. 3, 4. || Mal. iii. 5.

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your Souls, that constrains me to address you with all the Warmness in this, I am capable of. I know not any Merchants, Mariners, &c. that avow the Principle, that Stealing, Lying and Perjury in these are no Sins; and whatever you may think of the first two in the Case in Hand, yet you will join with me in condemning Perjury, as a very great Sin, whatever some flagitious Rakes may drop to the contrary. You will also own an Oath is a very sacred Thing, and Men ought to be very wary in taking Oaths: Yea some I have heard discourse this with a seeming peculiar Concern, who yet every Voyage, when they had Occasion, did steal and swear as said is, which was amazing to my self, and others also, when we heard them.

1. Now then, on your own avow'd Principles, let me expostulate a little with you. O how self-condemn'd will you be, to profess an Oath to be so sacred, and Perjury so great a Crime; and yet so often perjure your selves? † Will you profess to know God, and deny him in Works? Are not the Instances I have given, undeniable Perjuries? What in all the World

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can excuse them? Only then apply to your selves, and your own Practice in this, what you talk of Oaths and Perjury in general, and I'm sure it must be choaking to your Consciences. Do you only talk so, to amuse others? Or is it to deceive and cheat your selves? Sure if it be, easy Consciences you have, that will be blinded with it.

The Question then I would have you putting home to your selves, and seriously posing your Consciences with, when alone before God, is this, whether such hainous and unexcusable Sins above specified, ought to be done by you in any Case, for a little worldly Advantage? Is the Runing of Goods that deprives the Government of necessary Duties, justly imposed by King and Parliament, for the Defence of our Religion, Liberty, Property and Lives, and afterwards swearing the Oath at the Entry of Ships, or your swearing Untruths on the other Occasions already narrated, are these no Sins? Yea, are they not very great Iniquities? What can vindicate you of a damnable Perjury? Would Men but ponder the Matter, and commune with their own Hearts about this, it's impossible
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their Consciences could escape being terribly shock'd with it.

2. Have you no perplexing Thoughts about the Oath, before you swear it? Or, have you no Remorse at all after? What a Damp have I known some Masters under, before they went to the Custom-House, after they had run Goods? The Faces of some have bewrayed it to others; they have dropt it to their Relations, from whom I have heard it. Now, why all this, if there were no swearing falsely by taking Oaths? 'Tis evident, the Heaviness rises from this, that you see you are in this great Strait, either you must confess the stealing, or perjure your selves to hide it. What Storms have some of your Consciences suffer'd, till by habitual sinning you have got them laid asleep? Will not this be a Witness against you? O then, for the Lord's Sake, and for the Love you owe your Souls, stifle not these Convictions, despise not these Checks, quench not the Spirit, otherwise it will be fatal to you!

3. Have you no Dread of the dismal Consequences of this to your selves, or your Families? Have you no Fear, that the Judgment of God suddenly overtake you, when

you go to Sea? I confess it's to me a Wonder, if you can be free of frightful Fears one Voyage. I have observ'd some Masters go drunk aboard which perhaps is done on Design, to drown Care and Fear; and often I have seen Men very pensive and chagreen, when going aboard. This is not surprising to me; for beside the leaving your Families and Friends, many of you carry a guilty Conscience within you, which is a very cumbersome Cargo: No Wonder then, you dread to venture on the Back of that merciless Element, least on a Commission from a jealous God, you have incensed, it swallow you up, as often it hath done others.

4. Are not others often upbraiding you with it, such as the *Fair-Traders*, whom you wrong so much, and the Custom-House Officers who are faithful? Many Ministers both in private and publick, give Testimony against your Sin, and Neighbours often jest you with it, which ought not to be done; yea, often unfaithful Officers will rate you for it, when the Prey has escapt their Clutches. This sure cannot be pleasant to you, it cannot but grate sore, when something within you will silently

lently whisper in your Ears, as *Nathan* to *David*, *Thou art the Man*, will not this tend to make you very inexcusable?

5. How great Grief and Sorrow does your Sin give to others? Your conscientious Relations are afflicted with it; they know your runing the Goods, and something of the Oath; but if they knew all, it would be heavier to them. How grievous is it to all that fear God in the Place you live in, both private Christians and Ministers, that understand the several Ways you sin in this Matter? What a Grievance is it to faithful Ministers, to see so many under their Charge, so often and so deliberately commit so great Sins, and that People will scarce endure a Reproof for it in publick, no nor even the calmest, gentlest Admonition in private, so far are they from reforming it? How often do Merchants and Masters who are the leading People in Coast-Side Towns, &c. give much Trouble to Ministers, are Thorns in their Sides, and fill Parishes with Sedition and Mutiny, for the Freedom they use in publick, against the foresaid Sins? Happy Ministers, that have none in their Parishes guilty of such Crimes! Will not

the Grief and Sorrow you give Ministers on these Accounts, be requir'd at your Hands, and shall not Ministers be Witnesses against you, in the Day of the Lord?

6. Can you have Confidence to look God in the Face, to address him by Prayer, with such horrible Guilt on your Heads, which you are not resolved to mend, and which many of you do never reform? Can you think God will hear your Prayers, after you have so abominably profan'd his holy Name, and while you still regard this vilest Iniquity in your Hearts? I know indeed very few *Skipper*s pray with their Men at Sea in their Ships, and perhaps this is the Cause of it. I have known some Masters,, that carefully prayed at Sea; but so soon as they dropt Anchor, they dropt Prayer also. It seems the poor Men thought him the God of the Sea, and not of the dry Land, and that they were no more in his Reverence when once ashoar. But indeed the most Part neglect Prayer in their Ships wholly, tho' it's natural Worship, and Nature dictates this. *Jonah's* Mariners who were *Heathens*, call'd on their Gods, and chide him for the Neglect of Prayer, *What meanest thou, O Sleeper, say they, Arise,*

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rise, call upon thy God, &c. And shall professed Christians despise and live in a total Neglect of it, even in such Circumstances, as loudly call for it? Will not these *Heathens* rise up in Judgment against you, that restrain Prayer, and will not call on God, nor reform these Sins that fright you, that are prayerless Persons, from this sweet and necessary Duty?

7. Do you not commonly run many Dangers at Sea? How often are your Lives threatned with terrible and tempestuous Storms; and O! How many other various Casualties that put you in Danger, surprize you? And should you not then, even beyond others, live in all good Conscience, and shall you be worse? I knew a harden'd Wretch a Seaman, when a Minister was pressing him to keep up Family Worship when at a home, with the Consideration of their frequent great Dangers at Sea, and their signal Deliverances, he spurn'd and said, they were in no more Danger at Sea, than others at Land; we are in God's Hand at Sea, said he, as well as others at home. This shews no small Ignorance; the Devils are in God's Hand, and all Reprobates; nothing

nothing can befall them, but what he sees meet and orders, common Providence reacheth them: But no Creatures at Sea or Land are in the Hands of his special Providence, and under his fatherly tender Care, but his own Children, † *That have in well-doing committed the Care of themselves to God.* But further, are not even good and bad in more Danger at Sea, than at Land? I am sure Men are in more Danger there, than in their Houses at home. Are not the Lives of all in a Ship, on a Plank of two or three Inches thick, which is often strain'd, and the Baulks cracking with a heavy Cargo? Is not the best Vessel frail enough, while the proud violent Waves are often going over you, and searching round your Ship for a Cranny, at which they may invade you? How often are Seamen surpriz'd with a Leak, occasion'd by *Worm-Holes*, or the Place of old Nails not fill'd up, or the Springing of a Plank, against which all Hands can find no Relief? May not Ships Founder and be overfet by the Wind and Waves, especially with some Loadnings? Are you not in Danger to mistake Land in Day Light, especially

† 1 Pet. 4. 14.

especially when it's foagy Weather? Or not knowing where you are in a dark Night, to run on Land, or on a blind Rock, as you call it, *viz.* a Rock under Water, and so perish in a Moment; or at least strike off your Helm, and soon after be lost? May you not be thrown from the Masts when handling the Sails in a Storm, or washen over Deck, as many are? These are but a few of the many Dangers you are liable to at Sea; have you not Need, then to be the best of People? And shall you commonly be found guilty of Sins, that in other Employments People are not so much polluted with? How † *Oft* are you at your Wit's End in Storms, and Despair of Life? O Then! Let me obtest you by all the dreadful Dangers you have been in, and what you are obnoxious to, to repent of this your Wickedness, * and be afraid of doing this great Sin against the Lord, that can make stormy Winds, *Fire, Snow, Hail and Vapour* fulfil his Word.

8. Have not many of you been as remarkably delivered, as your Dangers have been great? Has not God surpriz'd with
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† Psal. 107, 27. * Psal. 148. 8.

a wonderful Deliverance, by calming Storms in a Moment, making the Wind to veer about, when you have been almost driven on Land; or by strange Accidents stopt Leaks, or brought up other Ships that reliev'd you with Water or Bread, when you were almost a starving; or fished you at Sea, and innumerable other Ways of which we have rare Instances in History? How frequently have some of you seen Ships lost hard by you in a Storm, one of them dash'd on another, or run a Ground, and all the Men perish; yea, some of your Comrads lost, and you saved; all the Company Ship-wreckt, and one or two fished almost dead, plucked out of the Jaws of Death? I have known some oftener than once so sav'd, and as naughty as any of you: I knew also some saved almost by a Miracle, the Ship was driven by Wind and Waves deep in the Sand, they were aboard a whole Day almost, every Sea going over them, and they standing in the Deck, the whole Ship being full of Water, their Flesh swollen and blister'd with the Water and Cold, and they almost frozen with Cold, and starving for Want of Food, and all this Time

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Death staring them in the Face; and at last by venturing to the Sea on a Part of the Vessel, all of them were saved; and yet afterwards scarce ever shew'd the least common Concern about it; yea, some of them were rather worse when they came home, than before. *Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish People and unwise?* Is this the Return you give to God, for his wonderful Deliverances, when he brings you back from the Gates of Death?

9. Is it possible that any of you that are knowing Men, can in these very amazing Dangers and Deliverances, escape a Discovery of these horrid Sins? Did not your Hearts smite you, when you were wringing your Hands and howling, while you seem'd to be on the very Confines of Eternity, and each Moment were expecting to go to the Bottom, and feed some Sea-Monster? O! What would you have given then to have been free of this and other Sins? Did you not then wish from your Hearts, you had never done it? Did not the Thoughts of it perplex you, and will you forget all this, and renew the Tragedy, as soon as you come home?

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10. Did you not often and solemnly, with much moral Seriousness, offer up Vows to Heaven, to live better as before; yea, perhaps to amend this very Sin, *And while his chastening Hand was upon you, you poured out a Prayer?* But no sooner did Providence give a Turn by an unexpected Deliverance, but even at Sea, Prayers and Vows, perhaps all instantly forgot, or at least, † *Tho' with Israel you believ'd his Word and sang his Praise, yet you soon forgot his mighty Works, and waited not for his Counsel.* But remember, * *Better thou shouldst not vow, than vow and not pay;* and that ‡ *'Tis a Snare for a Man to devour that which is holy, and after Vows to make Enquiry.* || *You have opened your Mouth to the Lord, and will you go back?* Did God hear your Vows and Cries and delivered you? Will he forget it, think you? Will he endure always to be mocked by you? I charge you by your solemn Appearance before that awful, glorious Tribunal of Christ, that you fulfill your Vows, and such of you as have been stupid as Beasts under all you have met with, that
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† Psal. cvi. 12, 13. * Eccl. v. 5. ‡ Proy. xx. 25.
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you will now consider what Dangers you have been in, and what the Deliverances he has wrought for you, calls for at your Hands.

11. As you have peculiar Need of the divine Care, and of his everlasting Arms to be about you, when at Sea; can you look for it, when not in good Terms with God; yea, when you are Sinners exceedingly before the Lord, and sin with such audacious Presumption to his Face? Have you any Ground to expect it, that will not commit your Souls and Bodies in well-doing to him, &c? 'Tis true the Righteous may fall with the Wicked in common Calamities, and God may long spare the worst, for the hardening of wicked Wretches, and the Trial of his own; yet Providence has, in such Deliverances sometimes made a wonderful Distinction: And however that be, yet by such notorious Crimes Men live in, they proclaim they have forfeited the divine Care.

12. Now to all Merchants, Mariners, &c. I would say, do you not by these Sins in Trade and in your Offices above expressed, provoke God to embitter all with his
Curse?

Curse? † What you earn, is often put into a Bag with Holes; he blows on it; and when you look for much, behold it comes to little. How often do many of you lose more by one Voyage, than you have perhaps gain'd all your Life, by all your Stealing, Cheating, Lying and Swearing? How often are Mariners and Merchants breaking? And do you think these Sins do not concur to bring on such Strokes? O then! Would not less Gain with a good Conscience, be far more desirable? * *The little that a righteous Man hath, is better than the Riches of many wicked.* ‡ *The Curse of the Lord is in the House of the wicked, but he bleisseth the Habitation of the just.*

13. Dear Country-Men, is not the Plague already begun on us? Is there not need to go quickly and make an Attainment, to fly to the Blood of a Saviour, that has attoned for the Sins of his People? How much have we suffer'd in our Trade, the great Idol of worldly Men, as well as in other Things more valuable, tho' less regarded by us? Has not the Indignation of God been flaming against us these two
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† Hag. i. 6, 9. * Psal. xxxvii. 16. ‡ Prov. iii. 33.

or three Years after the last Peace, that Mariners and Merchants lusted so much after? Likewise this very last Winter, how many Scots Ships and Men lost on the Coast of Orkney, Shetland, Norway, Holland and England? I never heard so many in one Winter, and of a great Part of them neither Man nor Boy sav'd. Has not the righteous Lord, by his own immediate Hand, shew'd terrible Tokens of his Displeasure against you, in such uncommon Loss of Ships, Men and Goods, at which People stand amazed? How many Families are impoverished? Is not the Number of Widows and fatherless Children mightily increased, and Shipping diminished? Is there not a very great Desolation in some Coast-side Towns, within these ten or eleven Years? Particularly, there is one Town in the Firth of Forth, that was very guilty of these Sins abovementioned, which is now a Monument of it; and when God is thus writing your Sin on your Stroke and Punishment, *When his Hand is lifted up, will you not see it?* Is it not high Time to ask, what meaneth the Heat of this great Anger? Have not many of you suffer'd in the common Calamity,

ty, the Loss of Goods and Friends, tho' you be spared? And O! Will you not hear this terrible Voice of such tremendous Judgments? Sure if you do not, *You may justly fear a worse Thing shall befall you.*

14. But after all, tho' you should still prosper, tho' some of you have escaped all these Losses, others are groaning under, tho' your Consciences let you sleep on; yet have you not an awful, solemn Reckoning before you? † Can you escape the Bar of Christ, the Judge of the quick and dead, where every Sinner must appear, and every Sin receive a just Recompence of Reward as it deserves? O! Think on it therefore e're it be too late! Will your vain Pretences and Excuses for these Sins, be found relevant and sustain'd by the holy and just Judge of all the Earth, at that Day? 'Tis impossible, or can your Hearts endure, or your Hands be strong in the Day that God dealeth with you? No, no, you may now indeed perhaps spend your Days in Mirth and Jolity, Drink, Carouse, Rant, and Wonder at all that will not run with you to the same Excess of Riot;

† 2 Cor. v. 10. Heb. ii. 3.

Riot; but what can allay your Sorrow, Agony and Confusion then, if you go on in these Sins, and live and die impenitent in them? I rejoice to hear that some of those guilty of the Sins mentioned, have been of late so affected with Ministers Freedom in reproving them, that they have refused the Offer of Ships, to shun the Snare; and I shall also wish they do not entangle Masters in a Perjury, and so have Accession to it themselves likewise, by runing Goods.

The World generally looks on the most Part of Sea-Men, as a very dissolute, rude and disorderly Kind of People, and I'm afraid there's too much Ground for that Sentiment of you, tho' I'm far from thinking you all so. I have known sober, discreet and well-bred Men among you; yea, truly religious Persons, that were very free of the Sins named. But it's no Wonder to me, that many are loose, nor perhaps will it be to others, if they consider what I judge to be the peculiar Causes of this among you, beside the common Causes of Profaneness and Vice.

1. Certainly these very Sins of Stealing, Swearing, &c. as is said, are debauching Sins and dispose Sea-Men, &c. to, yea, drive
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them natively upon others, especially where the same Lure of Gain is still in View. If Men think it lawful to Steal, Lie, Swear, yea, Murder, as sometimes for a little Gain; what will they think unlawful for that End? The Pretences and Topicks that serve for their Sins in Trade, we have charged them with, will entice to others. Likewise great Sins wound the Soul deep, and harden much, and when Persons are habitually guilty of them, they sin away the Remains of Conscience they had.

2. Not a few Seamen are wholly perverted in their younger Years, by the unhappy and pernicious Education they get aboard of some Men of War, or in the Company of *Bucaneers*, a Rabble of *incarnate Devils*; these are so poyson'd, that they seldom ever recover common Sobriety again.

3. The scandalous Examples they see, and Company they fall into in foreign Countries, where they have Liberty and Impunity to do what they please. The Eyes of Relations or Ministers of whom they stand in Aw, are not on them there, Magistrates do not put them to Shame; so

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that sometimes a Ship's whole Crew almost has come home poxed. Now when they give loose Reins to their Lusts abroad, how can they carry well at home?

4. By their Employment they are for the most Part deprived of the publick Ordinances, the Means of Grace, not only at Sea wholly in Merchant Men, but in most Places on Land also, by Reason of the Languages of the Places where they go, which they understand not; this is a great Loss few of them are sensible of, and 'tis peculiar to their Employment who are Sea-faring People; and when at home, none are more backward to attend publick Worship, especially Diets of *Catechising*, than many of them are.

5. Which follows on the other, many of them are grossly ignorant of the Principles of Religion; and it's commonly these that are the most unpeaceable and turbulent. I have been informed by some Ministers, that there are *Skippers* in their Parishes, who have good natural Parts, can read and write, and are sometimes Magistrates, who yet know not the very first Principles of the Oracles of God. This can't but dispose them for any Wickedness,

since Ignorance is a Nursery of all Sin.

6. They are accustom'd to working often necessarily on the Lord's Day; for in Storms, their greatest Throng of Work may be in it; and without a very conscientious Care, they that by their Callings are obliged to this, will insensibly slide into unnecessary Working, and other Profanations on that Day, of which Mariners are often guilty. And if once they come to be careless in keeping the Lord's Day, it's ordinarily found these Men are beyond others regardless of the rest of the *Moral Law*. For the *Fourth Command* knits the two Tables together, both in the Frame of the Law, and in our Practice; and if this Ligament be broke, it weakens the Obligation of the rest of the *Moral Law*, on the Conscience very strangely.

7. They are often, as has been said, in the greatest Dangers of their Life; they narrowly escape, and God works great Deliverances for many of them, and after all they are prodigiously unthankful to the God of their Life and Mercies. Now, when such extraordinary Providences do not suitably affect them, they can't but be pernicious Snares, through the just Judgment of God,

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to harden them, and give *Satan* a stronger Possession.

8. Several of our Seamen, especially be-North-Tay, are deeply leavened with *Jacobitism*, which is no sovereign Antidote against Profaneness, but very well consistent with it; yea, a fruitful Seminary of it, especially of *Lying* and *Swearing*, two bright Strokes in the lively Picture of a *Jacobite*.

Now then, my dear Friends, O that all would seriously consider these Things briefly hinted at, which certainly have a dangerous Influence to ensnare and pervert many of you, and carefully avoid them, since many of them have so direct and impetuous a Tendency to throw you upon the Sins chiefly here reprov'd! I therefore obtest and beseech all of you, both Seamen, Merchants and Officers of the Customs, by all the Mercies of God you receive or expect, by the Vows of God on you, the Perils you who are Mariners are often in at Sea, the dreadful Danger that all of your immortal Souls are in by these Sins, and by your fearful Appearance one Day at the high and awful Tribunal of the Lord Jesus Christ; to repent of this your Wickedness, *Break off your Sins by Repen-*
tance,

tance, that so Iniquity may not be your Ruin, reform and forsake your Sin, that you may find Mercy, pray if perhaps your Sin may be forgiven, fly to the grand Propitiation of the Blood of Jesus, and you shall get your Souls for a Prey. Let him that stole, steal no more; let him that lied and swore, lie and swear no more. † Finally Brethren, Whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report; if there be any Vertue, or if there be any Praise, think on these Things. I doubt not the Account here given of Sins in Trade, will be surprising to Ministers that live not near the Sea Coast; and therefore, I'm hopeful they will concur with others in the next Assembly, to give a particular and special Testimony against such Profaneness, and use their utmost Interest and Moyen for that Effect. I hope it will be found necessary to enjoin Ministers in Sea Towns, faithfully to reprove these Sins, to debar from Church-Priviledges, such as can be convict if they will not amend; and that none be admitted Elders, who will

† Phil. iv. 8.

will not expressely engage against these Sins, and if they be found guilty, that they be deposed; since it's well known that even some of these are infamous for this Stealing and Swearing falsely. I wish we had a National-Fast for these and other crying Sins, that abound. I can't think the *British* Parliament would decline to declare such perjur'd Wretches all intestible, and order all due Punishment to be inflicted, on them, according to the Merit of their horrid Crimes, if it were fairly represented to them. Sure I am if both State and Church do not more against such Wickedness than yet they have done, there is no Probability of any Stop to be put to it.

'Tis easy to divine what will be the Fate of these Sheets, what Entertainment generally this serious Reproof will receive from the guilty. No doubt some will rage so, that they will disdain to read it, tho' put into their Hands. These are the *Achans* indeed whom this Paper points out. But tho' Men will shut their Eyes and their Ears wilfully, they cannot hinder us to pay the seasonable Debt of Pity and Compassion to them. They indeed act not like reasonable Creatures, let be as *Christians*, but rather as *Mad-Men*; well, there's no Help for it, *decipiat qui decipi vult*, that that dyeth, let it dye!

Others perhaps will be a little more calm,
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they will read a little of it now and then, and so little Sense or Candor have they, that they'll strain and pervert the Words to the utmost, and divert their *Bon-Companions* at their Cups with a profane Scoff at what's said: However, mock as you will, you shall find they are Words of Truth and Soberness, *That your Bands shall be made strong.*

May be also some that are none of the worst will read it over, and grant there is too much Ground for the Charge; but withal will fasten their Teeth on the Author with some bitter *In-vectives*; 'tis too severe, he runs down the very *Employ* they'll say. But pray let me know what I have charged them with, that is not relevant, or what is unduly aggravated. The *Employ* is so far from being condemn'd, that it's only the Abuse of it that's censur'd; all Seamen are not charged with these Crimes, tho' few are altogether innocent; and indeed after all, as the World now goes, I frankly own, 'tis the last *Employment* I would choose, or would advise a Friend to follow.

I ingeniously protest, I bear them no Malice nor Ill-Will; I have received Favours from Seamen; and that Love to their Souls has engag'd me to use this seasonable Freedom with them. And if it would be regarded, I would gladly on my Knees with Tears beg each of them that are guilty, to repent and do no more so wickedly as many have done; and who knows but God may bless it to some? That it may be so remarkably to all, shall ever be the hearty Prayer of,
Your Souls cordial Well-wisher, &c..

